

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT - TIME ARTICLE "MUTED VOICE OF AMERICA"

REF: STATE 270187

1. FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR USE ON AN
"IF ASKED" BASIS BY DEPARTMENT AND USIA.

2. DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE:

QUESTION: THIS WEEK'S TIME CARRIES AN ARTICLE WHICH SAYS
THAT THE VOA HAS "MUTED" ITS BROADCASTS TO THE SOVIET
UNION AND THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE. CAN YOU ELABORATE?

ANSWER: AS YOU KNOW, THE VOICE OF AMERICA, WHICH IS THE
OFFICIAL RADIO VOICE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, IS A PART
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OF USIA. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU REFER THIS QUESTION TO USIA'S

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION.

QUESTION: WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING POLICY GUIDANCE TO USIA. WHAT GUIDANCE HAS THE DEPARTMENT GIVEN TO USIA ON ITS BROADCASTS TO EASTERN EUROPE AND THE USSR?

ANSWER: USIA DOES RECEIVE BROAD POLICY GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT. WHEN THERE ARE POLICY ASPECTS TO COVERAGE OF SPECIFIC EVENTS OR DEVELOPMENTS, GUIDANCE IS DEVELOPED THROUGH CONSULTATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENT AND USIA OFFICERS. WHILE WE WILL LEAVE COMMENT ON THE SPECIFIC CASES CITED TO USIA, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT THE TIMES STORY LEAVES A DISTORTED IMPRESSION IN SOME INSTANCES, THE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT USIA HANDLING OF THE COVERAGE ACCORDED WITH U.S. POLICY AND INTERESTS.

3. AGENCY GUIDANCE:

QUESTION: TODAY'S ISSUE OF TIME MAGAZINE CARRIED AN ARTICLE WHICH SAYS THAT THE VOICE OF AMERICA HAS "MUTUED" ITS BROADCASTS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND TO THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE. IS THIS TRUE?

ANSWER: IT IS THE POLICY OF VOA TO BROADCAST ALL OF THE NEWS. VOA BROADCASTS TO THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE FREQUENTLY INCLUDE ITEMS WHICH MAY BE IRRITATING OR EMBARRASSING TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. BUT, IF IT IS IN THE NEWS, WE CARRY IT.

QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT TIME'S CONTENTION THAT YOU ARE "SUPPRESSING" OR "CENSORING" SOME NEWS STORIES?

ANSWER: VOA BROADCASTS ALL THE NEWS. WHAT WE DO NOT DO IS TO HAVE OUR CORRESPONDENTS SEEK OUT STORIES ON INTERNAL QUESTIONS WHICH, IF ORIGINATED BY VOA, COULD BE READ AS THE OFFICIAL VIEW OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. FOR THIS TYPE OF STORY WE OFTEN DEPEND FOR OUR MATERIAL ON THE WIRE SERVICES AND OTHER COMMERCIAL MEDIA. I REITERATE, HOWEVER, IF THE STORY IS IN THE NEWS WE CARRY IT.

QUESTION: THE TIME STORY SAYS THAT "THE STATED MISSION (OF VOA) UNCLASSIFIED

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IS TO REPORT ON THE U.S. AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND TO 'COMBAT COMMUNISM.'" IS COMBATTING COMMUNISM IN FACT A PART OF VOA'S MISSION?

ANSWER: NO IT IS NOT. VOA'S ACTIVITIES ARE GOVERNED BY THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF MISSION:

1. VOA WILL ESTABLISH ITSELF AS A CONSISTENTLY RELIABLE AND

AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE OF NEWS. VOA NEWS WILL BE ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE.

2. VOA WILL REPRESENT AMERICA, NOT ANY SINGLE SEGMENT OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. IT WILL THEREFORE PRESENT A BALANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE PROJECTION OF SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN THOUGHT AND INSTITUTIONS.

3. AS AN OFFICIAL RADIO, VOA WILL PRESENT THE POLICIES OF THE UNITED STATES CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY. VOA WILL ALSO PRESENT RESPONSIBLE DISCUSSION AND OPINION ON THESE POLICIES.

QUESTION: IS THE ACCOUNT OF MR. LITVINOV'S TALK TO THE EMPLOYEES OF THE VOA'S USSR DIVISION ACCURATE?

ANSWER: NO IT IS NOT. MR. LITVINOV DID INDEED SPEAK TO THE STAFF OF OUR USSR DIVISION AS HAVE A NUMBER OF OTHER PROMINENT FIGURES FAMILIAR WITH CONDITIONS IN THE USSR. WE ENCOURAGE THESE GUESTS TO BE AS CRITICAL AS THEY WISH IN ORDER TO BENEFIT FROM THEIR VIEWS. WITH MR. LITVINOV'S CONSENT,

THE VOA TAPED HIS TALK FOR THE BENEFIT OF STAFF MEMBERS WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT AT THE TIME HE SPOKE. A REVIEW OF THE TAPE REVEALS THAT HE DID NOT MAKE THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO HIM BY TIME. WHAT HE DID SAY, INTER ALIA, WAS THAT "IN THE LAST YEAR OF TWO VOA BEGAN TO SAY LESS ABOUT INTERNAL EVENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE." FOR THE RECORD: NO APPLAUSE FOLLOWED HIS COMMENT.

QUESTION: TIME MAGAZINE CITED A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC INSTANCES OF ALLEGED "CENSORSHIP" OF THE NEWS. WOULD YOU CARE TO COMMENT ON ANY OF THESE?

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ANSWER: THE EXAMPLES CITED OCCURRED, BUT TIME DIDN'T GIVE THE FULL STORY. SPECIFICALLY:

A. VOA DID NOT BROADCAST THE TEXT OR EXTENSIVE EXCERPTS FROM GULAG ARCHIPELAGO; TO DO SO WOULD HAVE BEEN INCONSISTENT WITH VOA'S CUSTOMARY BROADCAST POLICY. WE DID HOWEVER FULLY COVER THE SOLZHENITSYN/GULAG STORY. IN FACT, IN THE PERIOD FROM DECMEBER 28 THROUGH APRIL 3, VOA BROADCASTS IN RUSSIAN AND OTHER LANGUAGES OF THE USSR CONTAINED MORE THAN 50 HOURS OF NEWS ACCOUNTS CONCERNING MR. SOLZHENITSYN AND HIS BOOK GULAG ARCHIPELAGO. THIS FIGURE INCLUDES REPEATS. DURING THE SAME PERIOD, THESE LANGUAGE SERVICES BROADCAST TO THE USSR MORE THAN 180 ORIGINAL STORIES, INCLUDING BOOK REVIEWS, IMPRESSIONS OF U.S. AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS, EDITORIALS, AND REACTIONS TO THE AUTHOR'S EXPLULSION, FOR A TOTAL OF 130 BROADCAST HOURS, COUNTING REPEATS.

IN ADDITION, THE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF THE MAN AND THE BOOK ON VOA'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE BROADCASTS COULD ALSO BE HEARD BY LISTENERS IN THE USSR.

B. AS TIME REPORTED, VOA'S MUNICH BUREAU DID SUGGEST A SERIES ON "YOUNG WORKERS" AND "YOUNG ELITES." THE SERIES WAS TURNED DOWN BECAUSE IT IS NOT PART OF VOA'S MISSION TO BROADCAST TO THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION, OR FOR THAT MATTER TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY OF THE WORLD, COMMENTAIRIES ON THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS -- UNLESS OF COURSE A STORY CONCERNING AN INTERNAL MATTER ACQUIRES INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE IN WHICH CASE IT WOULD BE FULLY COVERED BY THE VOA.

C. VOA CARRIED AN ITEM ON THE POSSIBILITY OF THE RESUMPTION OF U.S. ARMS SALES TO YUGOSLAVIA. THE CORRESPONDENT'S STORY WAS NOT USED BECAUSE IT SPECULATED IN SOME DETAIL ON A SENSITIVE ISSUE.

D. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT A VOA CORRESPONDENT'S STORY ON THE TRIAL OF A GROUP OF CROATIANS ACCUSED OF SEPARATISM WAS NOT USED IN ITS ENTIRETY. THE STORY ITSELF, HOWEVER, WAS FULLY COVERED IN A VOA BROADCAST. IT WAS BASED ON WIRE SERVICE REPORTS AS WELL AS THE VOA CORRESPONDENT'S STORY.

QUESTION: WE UNDERSTAND THAT ONE OF YOUR OFFICIALS RECENTLY SENT OUT A LETTER "STIFENING" THE 1967 RULING WHICH PERTAINS TO VOA UNCLASSIFIED

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CORRESPONDENTS.

COULD YOU COMMENT?

ANSWER: A LETTER WAS SENT TO OUR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS STATIONED IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION. THE LETTER DID NOT CHANGE THE EXISTING RULES. IT MERELY ELABORATED ON THE 1967 GUIDELINES WHICH HAD BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY AT LEAST ONE OF OUR CORRESPONDENTS WHO FROM TIME TO TIME REPORTS FROM EASTERN EUROPE. INGERSOLL

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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740359-0143
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741243/aaaabkon.tel
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